

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An implantable tissue approximation device comprising:
{a)} a supportive backing having at least one through-hole formed therethrough; and
{b) ~~a plurality of~~} at least one attachment point{s} extending from said backing.
2. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said backing has a shape in the form of a character selected from the group consisting of C, H, I, L, T, U, V, Λ , and \cap .
3. (Currently Cancelled).
4. (Currently Amended, and Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein the supportive backing has a discrete plate region in which the at least one through-hole is formed for {useful in} setting fragmented bones and a discrete tine region from which the at least one attachment point extends {useful in} for suspending soft tissue {wherein the supportive backing is thicker in the plate region than in the tine region}.
5. (Currently Amended, and Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim 4 wherein the {plate region comprises at least one hole} plate region has a thickness greater than that of the tine region.

6. (Currently Amended, and Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim ~~[5]~~ 4 wherein the plate region ~~[is timeless]~~ includes no attachment points extending therefrom.

7. (Currently Amended, and Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim 4 wherein the plate region and the tine region are integrally formed together ~~[with the supportive backing].~~

8. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said backing is configured to be flexible.

9. (Currently Cancelled).

10. (Currently Amended) The tissue approximation device of claim ~~[9]~~ 1 wherein said at least one through-hole is slotted.

11. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said backing comprises porous material.

12. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 11 wherein said porous material comprises a mesh, net, or lattice.

13. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said backing comprises a solid material.

14. (Currently Amended) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said at least one attachment point includes a plurality of attachment points that are varied in density on said backing.

15. (Currently Amended) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said at least one attachment point includes a plurality of attachment points that are varied in length on said backing.

16. (Currently Amended) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said at least one attachment point~~{s have}~~ includes a shape~~{s}~~ and direction~~{s}~~ selected from the group consisting of canted tines, erect tines, canted hooks, canted arrowheads, erect barbed tipped tines, canted barbed tipped tines, erect arrowhead tipped tines, canted arrowhead tipped tines, erect nail-shaped tines, canted nail-shaped tines, and cheese grater-like tines.

17. (Currently Amended) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said at least one attachment point~~{s each}~~ defines a facet configured to be less than or equal to 90 degrees with a plane defined by tissue to be pierced by said at least one attachment point~~{s}~~.

18. (Currently Amended) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said backing further comprises a front side and a back side, and wherein said at least one attachment point~~{s}~~ extends from said front side.

19. (Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim 18 further comprising a floor extending from said back side of said backing wherein said floor provides additional support and fixation to fractured bones to be repaired.

20. (Currently Cancelled).

21. (Currently Amended) The tissue approximation device of claim ~~{19}~~ 1 wherein the at least one attachment point includes a plurality of attachment points, and wherein the at least one through-hole is ~~{further comprising at least one screw hole}~~ disposed between the

attachment points ~~[in said backing wherein said hole is sized to accommodate a fastener therethrough]~~.

22. (Currently Cancelled).

23. (Currently Amended, and Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim [20] 1 wherein said supportive backing is horseshoe shaped.

24. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein the supportive backing is rigid.

25. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 24 wherein the supportive backing has a strength sufficient to set fragmented bones.

26. (Currently Amended) The tissue approximation device of claim [25] 1 wherein the [supportive backing defines] at least one through hole includes a plurality of through-holes formed through the supportive backing [for receiving a fastener].

Claims 27-45: (Currently Cancelled).

46. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said device comprises a material selected from the group consisting of biodegradable and biological materials.

47. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 46 wherein said biological material comprises one or more materials selected from the group consisting of collagen, hydroxyapatite from natural sources, hydroxyapatite from synthetic sources, bone graft, and any polymerized versions or composites thereof.

48. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said backing is curved.

49. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said device is configured such that it is shapeable intra-operatively for use in a patient's body.

50. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 18 wherein said back side of said backing is concave.

51. (Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 further comprising a rigid fracture plate connected to said supportive backing via an extension member.

52. (Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim 51 wherein said extension member is thread-like.

53. (Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim 51 wherein said fracture plate includes at least one bone anchor to secure the plate to a fracture site.

54. (Currently Amended) The tissue approximation device of claim [1] 26 wherein said at least one attachment point includes a plurality of attachment points that are interspersed among the plurality ~~{device comprises a number}~~ of through-holes ~~{of equal spacing}~~.

55. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 wherein said device comprises at least one therapeutic agent.

56. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 55 wherein said device is impregnated with said at least one therapeutic agent.

57. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 55 wherein said device is coated with said at least one therapeutic agent.

58. (Original) The tissue approximation device of claim 57 wherein said at least one therapeutic agent is selected from the group consisting of proteins, pharmaceuticals, genetic material.

59. (Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim 1 further comprising at least one bone anchor joined to said backing via a narrow extension member.

60. (Currently Amended, and Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim 59 wherein said extension member is thread-like and joined to the backing via the at least one through-hole.

61. (Currently Withdrawn) The tissue approximation device of claim 60 further comprising a knob rotatably connected to said anchor and extending therefrom, said knob connected to a proximal end of said extension member such that rotation of said knob adjusts the length of said extension member.

Claims 62-91: (Currently Cancelled).